

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3671
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ACCRA 4004

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, GH
SUBJECT: ACHEAMPONG COMPLAINS OVER LACK OF US-UK SUPPORT

REF: ACCRA 3385

1. SUMMARY: ON MAY 11 HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG
COMPLAINED TO THE FRG AMBASSADOR TO GHANA THAT
THE US AND UK ARE NOT GIVING HIS GOVERNMENT ENOUGH
SUPPORT. ACHEAMPONG SAID HE IS STRONGLY ANTI-
COMMUNIST BUT THAT THE AMERICANS AND BRITISH WERE
APPARENTLY BACKING EXTREME LEFTIST ELEMENTS IN GHANA.
WE THINK HIS STATEMENTS REFLECT CONCERN WITH PRESSING
DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, RESENTMENT THAT THE US AND UK
DO NOT SUPPORT HIM EFFUSIVELY, AND UNHAPPINESS OVER
OUR RECENT DEMARCHE ON HUMAN RIGHTS. END SUMMARY.

2. FRG AMBASSADOR TO GHANA HERBERT WEIL HAS INFORMED
BOTH ME AND ACTING BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER BRASNETT
THAT HEAD OF STATE ACNEAMPONG COMPLAINED TO HIM ON
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MAY 11 ABOUT WHAT ACMEAMPONG SAID WAS A LACK OF
BRITISH AND U.S. SUPPORT FOR HIS GOVERNMENT. THE
WEIL-ACHEAMPONG CONVERSATION OCCURED AT A SMALL
PRIVATE DINNER AT WHICH ONLY OTHER GUESTS WERE THE
HOST (GHANAIAAN MANAGER OF KOWUS MOTORS, THE LOCAL
VOLKSWAGEN AGENCY) AND HIS GERMAN WIFE. THE MANAGER,
KOFI OWUSU, IS A FIRST COUSIN OF MRS. ACHEAMPONG,

WHO IS BELIEVED TO HAVE A MAJOR INTEREST IN THE FIRM.

3. IN THE CONVERSATION, ACHEAMPONG DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A DEDICATED OPPONENT OF COMMUNISM AND SAID HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY DISMISS ANYONE IN HIS GOVERNMENT HE SUSPECTED OF COMMUNIST TIES. HE FELT THERE WAS NO CHANCE FOR THE COMMUNISTS TO OBTAIN A REAL FOOT-HOLD IN AFRICA, "NOT EVEN IN ANGOLA OR ETHIOPIA," AND STRESSED THE ABSENCE OF A COMMUNIST PARTY IN GHANA. HE THEREFORE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE BRITISH AND AMERICANS APPARENTLY "SUPPORTED FORCES IN GHANA WHICH, IN ORDER TO FURTHER THEIR OWN SELFISH INTERESTS, WERE READY TO FOLLOW A RADICAL, LEFT-WING POLICY." HE SAID THAT IN HIS SIX YEARS IN OFFICE HE HAD WORKED HARD TO FREE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS FROM EXTREMIST LEFTIST INFLUENCE, AND HE FEARED THAT THE BRITISH AND AMERICANS WERE NOW APPARENTLY WILLING "TO LET THESE (LEFTIST) ELEMENTS AGAIN GET A FOOTHOLD."

4. ACHEAMPONG WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THE SOCIAL LEGACY LEFT IN GHANA BY THE BRITISH AND MENTIONED SEVERAL OLD-LINE, BRITISH-EDUCATED GHANAIAAN FAMILIES WITH CLOSE TIES TO BRITAIN "WHO DISLIKED AND WORKED AGAINST ANY GOVERNMENT OF

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GHANA IN WHICH THEY DID NOT PLAY A LEADING ROLE"-- DR. F.A. JANTUAH, THE OFORI-ATTAS, AND STRANGELY ENOUGH, ALEX HUTTON-MILLS, WHO UNTIL THE PAST FEW WEEKS WAS A FERVENT SUPPORTER OF ACHEAMPONG AND UNION GOVERNMENT.

5. WARMING TO HIS THEME OF OVERCOMING THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM, ACHEAMPONG CITED THE SCHOOL LEAVER PROBLEM AND THE DISTASTE FOR FARM OR OTHER MANUAL LABOR INCULCATED IN GHANAIAAN STUDENTS IN THE PAST. HE WAS WORKING HARD TO CHANGE THIS ATTITUDE AND TO ROOT IN THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS THE IMPORTANCE AND DIGNITY OF SUCH LABOR. HE STRESSED THAT THERE WAS "NO QUESTION" IN GHANA OF REDISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY OR THE INSTITUTION OF ANY NEW SOCIAL SYSTEM. ASSERTING AGAIN HE WAS STAUNCHLY ANTI-COMMUNIST, HE COMPLAINED BITTERLY AT BBC COVERAGE OF THE MARCH REFERENDUM AND OF HIS GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL. REFERRING TO RECENT STUDENT UNREST ON GHANAIAAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES, ACHEAMPONG SAID THAT HIS OWN MODERATE REACTION TO THESE PROBLEMS WAS ROUNDLY CRITICISED BY BBC, WHILE THE NIGERIAN ACTION IN

SHOOTING DOWN SOME OF THEIR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN
SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES PASSED VIRTUALLY UNNOTICED
BY BBC. HE HAD BEEN "DEEPLY HURT" BY BBC POLEMICS
AND COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY HMG DID NOT STOP
THEM. THESE ATTACKS CAUSED A SEVERE STRAIN IN UK-
GHANAIAAN RELATIONS. ACHEAMPONG SAID HIS CRITICISM
ALSO APPLIED, ALTHOUGH "TO A LESSER DEGREE," TO
THE U.S. THE AMERICANS, HE SAID, SOMETIMES TENDED
TO UNDERMINE THE POSITION OF HIS GOVERNMENT WITHOUT
REALIZING THAT IN DOING SO THEY WERE WEAKENING
"ONE OF THE MOST RELIABLE ANTI-COMMUNIST LEADERS
AND GOVERNMENTS IN AFRICA."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ACCRA 4004

LONDON FOR SEITZ

6. ACHEAMPONG ALSO CRITICISED THE PRACTICES OF
BRITISH BUSINESS FIRMS--HE MENTIONED LEVER BROTHERS
AND ESPECIALLY BANKS--AND WONDERED ALOUD WHY
THEY COULD NOT HAVE GIVEN GHANA A "MORATORIUM" ON
THE PAYMENT OF DEBTS. HE HAD EXPECTED THAT BRITISH

FIRMS WOULD BE MORE

"ACCOMMODATING" BECAUSE GHANA

URGENTLY NEEDED SUCH AN ACCOMMODATION IN ITS PRESENT ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES. THE CHAIRMAN REVEALED THAT HE HAD WRITTEN TO GENERAL OBASANJO PROPOSING THAT PART OF NIGERIA'S OIL INCOME BE INVESTED IN NIGERIAN-GHANAIAAN JOINT VENTURES SUCH AS BAUXITE DEPOSITS AND AN ITEN ORE PROJECT NEAR TAKORADI. ADMITTING THAT "NOTHING HAS HAPPENED," ACHEAMPONG SAID HE WAS VERY SKEPTICAL OF THE "FUTURE PROSPECTS" OF NIGERIA, COMMENTING CAUSTICALLY THAT "THEIR MONEY HAS GONE TO THEIR HEADS."

7. ACHEAMPONG WARMLY PRAISED THE FRG (AND CANADIAN) AID EFFORTS HERE BUT WAS VERY CRITICAL OF THE SOVIET
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UNION. HE REFERRED CONTEMPTUOUSLY TO THE SOVIET GIFT SEVERAL MONTHS AGO OF 4,000 TONS OF WHEAT, NOTING THAT IT HAD BEEN ACCOMPANIED LOCALLY BY A "HUGE PROPAGANDA EFFORT." THE RUSSIANS, ACHEAMPONG SAID, "TALKED A LOT BUT DID LITTLE." HE WOULD CONTINUE TO BE VIGNALT WITH RESPECT TO THE RUSSIANS BECAUSE HE KNEW THEY WOULD SEIZE UPON DISSATISFIED ELEMENTS ANYWHERE THEY COULD, INCLUDING GHANA.

8. COMMENT: SUCH AN INDIRECT MANNER (I.E., THROUGH THE FRG AMBASSADOR) OF CONVEYING CRITICISM TO SOMEONE (US AND BRITISH) IS ROOTED IN GHANAIAAN CULTURE. ACHEAMPONG'S COMMENTS IN THIS CONVERSATION ARE INTERESTING BUT STRANGE. HE RARELY ATTENDS SUCH SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, AND WE SUSPECT HE DID SO ON THIS OCCASION TO COMPENSATE FOR NOT RECEIVING THE VISITING FRG MINISTER OF STATE, MRS. HILDEGARD HAMM-BRUCHER, A FEW WEEKS EARLIER. HIS STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST STAND IS OF COURSE ONE HE HAS PREVIOUSLY EMPHASIZED TO ME ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. HIS BITTERNESS OVER BBC BROADCASTS IS GENUINE AND, AT LEAST IN PART, UNDERSTANDABLE. ON THE OTHER HAND, HIS CRITICISM OF BRITISH FIRMS HERE REFLECTS AN ABYSMAL AND ALARMING IGNORANCE OF THE DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION. SIMILARLY, HIS MILD SWIPE AT THE U.S. IS PUZZLING. HE KNOWS, AS DOES HIS TOP ECHELON OF OFFICIALS, THAT WE HAVE NOT SUPPORTED THE OPPOSITION HERE--WHO IN ANY CASE ARE MAINLY PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE AND STUDENTS, NOT THE "EXTREMIST RADICALS" HE DESCRIBES. WE SUSPECT HE INCLUDED THE U.S. IN HIS CRITICISM POSSIBLY BECAUSE (A) HE DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO COPE WITH HIS PRESSING DOMESTIC PROBLEMS; (B) HE RESENTS OUR LACK

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OF OPEN AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR HIS GOVERNMENT;
AND (C) HE FEELS SOME UNHAPPINESS OVER OUR RECENT
DEMARCHE ON HUMAN RIGHTS (REFTEL). I PLAN TO
SEE ACHEAMPONG IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS AND WILL HAVE
THE OPPORTUNITY TO DRAW HIM OUT FURTHER.
SMITH

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